

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

NYDIA M. VELAZQUEZ

7TH DISTRICT, NEW YORK

June 18, 2018

Linda McMahon
Administrator
U.S. Small Business Administration
409 3rd St SW
Washington, DC 20024

Dear Administrator McMahon:

I am writing to request that you exercise your authority to accept and process late disaster loan applications for those affected by Hurricane Maria. As you know, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) failed to officially extend the application periods for disaster relief. Specifically, I am referring to the deadlines of June 18 for physical disaster loans and June 20 for economic injury loans. It is of the utmost importance that victims of this disaster have every opportunity to access assistance to rebuild and recover.

Hurricane Maria was one of the most devastating storms on record, resulting in over \$90 billion in damages to Puerto Rico and other Caribbean Islands. Puerto Rico experienced the largest blackout in U.S. history, and thousands are still without reliable electrical power to this day. Coupled with other infrastructure issues and delayed damage assessments, these factors combined to have a significant impact on the Island's economy and the ability of small businesses to restart and grow.

The SBA disaster loan program was created so that local economies could recover quickly from these disasters in a timely and efficient manner. It has helped communities get back on their feet while at the same time ensuring an efficient use of taxpayer's dollars in a recovery effort. Unfortunately, nine months after the storm, demand for SBA disaster loans continues to be robust. According to reports, the Agency is still receiving approximately 300 applications for assistance every day.

With all the obstacles that those in the region have faced, everything should be done to avoid creating unnecessary hardships that will only hinder recovery efforts by ending access to SBA disaster assistance. Therefore, I urge you to exercise your authority to continue to accept and process disaster loan applications, for at least 90 days, after the deadlines of June 18 and June 20 for physical and economic injury, respectively.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Nydia M. Velázquez", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress